

BOOK REVIEW

Insects and the life of man, by Sir Vincent B. Wigglesworth. 1976. Halsted Press, a division of John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 605 Third Avenue, N.Y., NY 10016. Hard-bound, 217p., \$12.50.

Sir Vincent B. Wigglesworth is a name that should be familiar to any serious worker in the field of entomology. Many publications have resulted from his research and they have appeared during the past half century. This volume, however, is a compilation of essays and lectures which were presented by Wigglesworth before general audiences over a forty year period. Each chapter covers a distinct topic, i.e., Insects and Human Affairs, The Science and Practice of Entomology, Malaria in War, etc. All of the chapters are well written and make for enjoyable and informative reading. Agricultural entomologists, medical entomologists, and insect physiologists will be well pleased with the topics covered. Although the topics are not presented in chronological order and the book is not meant to be a history, the fact is that the reader is exposed to a fair portion of the recent past history of entomology, especially in the area of insect physiology.

It is clear that Wigglesworth understands the basic principles of ecology and he emphasizes strongly the importance of ecology and physiology to basic research on insects. It is evident that he was one of the first researchers who was aware of the complex problems associated with the use of DDT and other insecticides. In Chapter 15, Experimental Biology, Pure and Applied (presented as a lecture in 1971 before the Society for Experimental Biology), the author discusses the dependence of applied research on basic research and the fact that, in Britain, the Agricultural Research Council's Unit of Insect Physiology came into being for just this reason. He is convinced that this, in principle, ". . . is what will happen in the present crisis of science in the United States. Cut off the continuing supply of new basic scientific knowledge and the applied sciences quickly run out of steam. They set up such a call for help that the whole vast machine of fundamental research has to be set going again." Wigglesworth's prediction undoubtedly will come to pass—but how long must we wait?

This volume is remarkably free of typographical errors. An annoying omission, however, is the lack of a Title for Table 1 on page 107. The only other shortcoming worthy of note is the fact that as one reads any given chapter one is not certain as to the date when the chapter was written. Since so much has occurred in the field of entomology during the last forty years some of the statements can be misconstrued. This information *is* available in the Introduction and had the date of each essay or lecture simply been included under the title at the beginning of each chapter this confusion could have been avoided. But these are minor criticisms. Seldom does a reviewer in entomology review a book that is worthy of recommendation to all entomologists. *Insects and the Life of Man* is an exception. I recommend this book to all entomologists. It is enjoyable, informative, stimulating, and it is a tribute to the professional life of the author—a great entomologist.

—P.P.S.

